year, the central excise duty on pharmaceutical products including drugs/medicines were reduced from 16% to 8%. Thereafter, the central excise duty on drugs/medicines was further reduced from 8% to 4% with effect from 7th December, 2008.

Vaccine for Swine Flu

161. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has taken initiatives to develop vaccine injection or medicine to prevent/cure Swine Flu;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SRIKANT JENA): (a) to (c) The Directorate General of Health Services has issued the Test License to following firms for the import of strains in respect of Swine Flue for the purpose of examination, test or analysis:

(i) M/s Serum Institute of India Limited, Pune

(ii) M/s Panacea Biotec, New Delhi

(iii) M/s Bharat Biotech International Limited, Hyderabad.

Delay in finalization of National Pharmaceutical policy

162. MS. MABEL REBELLO:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Parliamentary Standing Committee has expressed concern over delay in finalizing drug policy;

(b) whether policy aims to bring 354 essential medicines in price control;

(c) whether panel has pointed out that no headway has been made in finalization of national pharmaceutical policy and have pointed out that the policy is pending with GoMs on pharmaceutical policy for almost two years;

(d) whether he has sought Prime Minister's intervention to clear the policy; and

(e) what are the other main recommendations made by the Committee for policy and how many of its recommendations have so far been considered and accepted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SRIKANT JENA): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The Supreme Court *vide* its interim order dated 10.3.2003 in SLP (C) No.3668/2003 directed the Government, *Inter alia*, to "consider and formulate appropriate criterion for ensuring